Once Sober

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Once Sober

by TigerPrawn

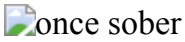
Summary

The four Times Luke Brandon kissed whilst drunk, and the once when he was sober.

Notes

An idea from long ago in the Cannibal Pub that I decided to fit to Luke and Le Chiffre...

Chapter 1



College - Eddie

Luke Brandon leaned against the bar, needing its support to remain upright more than he'd care to admit. He perhaps shouldn't have had quite so much to drink before leaving the Halls of Residence, but he'd needed something to give him confidence. Or to perhaps to just quell his fear and doubts long enough to head into Oxford city centre and to a gay bar he'd looked up online.

Despite having purposely not gone on a 'student night', the guy smiling at him from along the bar must be his age. The fact that he might be a student, might see him around campus, terrified Luke.

When the man wandered over, casually with beer in hand, Luke wanted to run. What confidence he had gained from drinking was slowly diminishing under the weight of the man's gaze.

"Hey. I'm Eddie." An American accent and a smile.

"Brandon." Luke replied, trying hard to return the smile. "I'm kind of nervous…" he let out a self-depreciative chuckle and was a little unnerved by his own honesty.

"Don't be!" Another smile from Eddie. Warm and welcoming.

An hour later and they were dancing. Eddie pulling him gently closer. Luke warmly drunk. Drunk enough to be happy to let Eddie press their lips together. It was strange and arousing. Stubble on Eddie's face scratched at him in an unfamiliar way. Nerves and alcohol made Luke clumsy - his lips awkward, the kiss too wet, his mouth too open. Eddie took control of the kiss and improved things bit by bit. Even so, Luke wasn't drunk enough not to feel mortified at his inebriated fumblings. He excused himself to use the bathroom, but instead he left the bar and went home.

Internship - Ned

Moving to the United States had been weird. Cathartic on some level, but strange to be in the same country as his mother but not be in touch. On top of that, it was so different to the upper class British childhood and adolescence he had experienced. Some things seemed tradition in the US that weren't quite as common back home - office parties for one. There didn't seem to be two months together that there wasn't an excuse for an office party. As an intern it was difficult to get out of them, though he often found them boisterous and off putting. He was often put to helping with some of the organisation (official title: Dog's body!), and he was expected to network - to make the most of the internship.

And yet, he found himself alone, several drinks down, and staring at a table full or pies. Pies! The events department had, even they admitted, struggled to find an original theme for the annual revenue update that the party was celebrating. Someone had suggested, after a powerpoint presentation of the update featuring a large number of pie charts - that this would be a fun and memorable way to cater the party. Luke had no doubt that they were right, at least on the memorable front.

He was just finishing his fourth beer, and first slice of pie, when the man appeared. He was tall and awkwardly cute. Luke couldn't help but study the man, his inebriation causing his mask to drop. And then the man was looking over before Luke could look away.

Furtive glances had been stolen on both sides throughout the evening, but nothing more. Not until the caterer - Ned, Luke had discovered through one of the events team - made his way out to his van. On his third trip to the van carrying empty pie tins, Luke followed him. His heart was racing, the beer driving him on. In the parking garage he approached Ned as he moved to get in the van. Surprise, but then a smile.

"Oh. Hey." A nervous lilt.

"I've um… I've been watching you all night." Luke only slurred the words ever so slightly as he damned, again, the uncontrollable honesty that surfaced whilst he was drunk.

"I noticed." The smile widened into a grin, which Luke reflected even as he felt heat rising in a blush across his cheeks.

They talked a few minutes. Awkward at first - there were only so many questions you could ask about pies. And then Ned had handed him a business card and told him he could call sometime. He took the card and swayed a little. His eyes on Ned's lips. Ned smiled and opened the van do to get in, having to pass Luke as he did so. On his way past Luke pressed forward ever so slightly - probably more aggressively than he had intended given the alcohol he had imbibed. Even so, he met Ned in a tangle of lips and teeth. Luke over balancing slightly and falling forward, dragging his lips down to Ned's chin. He pulled back. Horrified and not in the least comforted by the amused smile on Ned's face. Luke mumbled goodbyes and headed back inside to the office, dropping the business card in the trash as he went.

Networking - Christian

Christian Grey was an imposing man to some. Luke just found him arrogant and annoying. Not least at this conference, the third Luke had spotted him at. He was of course the poster child for business success - a marvel at his young age - Luke was constantly informed.

When the keynote speech was over, Luke headed to the restroom. The wine from the reception before hand, and his lack of food having been on the road to the conference when he might have eaten, meant he was pretty tipsy.

"Brad, right?" The words from Christian Grey. The man was washing his hands as Luke exited a cubicle. He joined Christian at the bank of sinks.

“Brandon, Luke Brandon.” He corrected as his companion snatched up paper towels to dry his hands. There was only a beat of silence between them, but for the sound of running water and rustle of paper, when Grey spoke again -

“I noticed you at the conference in Baltimore. I enjoyed your presentation. You make quite the impression.” A confident smile that made Luke nervous and, he hated to admit it, slightly aroused.

It was as though Grey could pick up on that because he was then putting his hand in his pocket and slipping something out of it and into Luke’s still wet hand. A key card.

“Nine pm.” And then he was gone, leaving Luke trembling.

Luke had consumed most of his mini-bar before finally deciding he would visit Christian. It was almost half nine when he stumbled towards the businessman’s room - quickly letting himself in with the card before he had chance to change his mind.

“Hmm, I appreciate punctuality.” A voice admonished from within the room- Grey was lounging on the couch in his suite, slightly damp and a towel around his waist. Luke swallowed and felt his skin prickle with nervous sweat at the sight of the man. “Join me.” A tap on the sofa.

Luke hesitated for only a moment before he did so, taking a seat next to Christian.

“You’ve been drinking.” The businessman noted, seeming slightly disappointed.

“A little…” Luke admitted. “I’m nervous…”

Luke wasn’t sure what further words were spoken - distracted by Christian, fogged by miniature spirits. Luke didn’t even register that Christian was kissing him until he let his lips part and accept the kiss further. He was back in the moment then - this was happening. Perhaps he’d had *just* enough to drink that he had the nerve for this without screwing it up. He let Christian lead the kiss, allowing and enjoying the soft flick of a tongue.

It was when Christian’s hand went to Luke’s crotch and started to palm his dick that he jumped, breaking the kiss. Then Luke was on his feet, lightheaded at the sudden movement. He muttered something half incomprehensible and quickly left the room. He checked out early the next morning with 2 days left to the conference.

Editor - Rebecca

Luke had managed to escape the clutches of Alicia, but not of Rebecca Bloomwood. In truth he was terribly fond of the quirky young woman. Fond enough that he thought he might be able to make a go of it with her.

He knew he had been wrong the night of the dinner. Out on the balcony with a few drinks inside him to make him just the warm side of tipsy, he kissed her. Gently. As it had to be with women - respectful of their soft skin. The taste of wine on both their lips mingled together and made a sort of sweetness that Luke tried to cling to. Willing himself to want it.

Luke had been with women before, tried to find some pleasure in it and then resigned himself to at least accepting the inevitability of it.

That night on the balcony hadn't been the beginning of something with Rebecca, it had been the beginning of the end. He tried. He tried so very hard. And she was so very understanding. She was so very sweet, like the wine.

Self-made Man - Sober

Luke didn't consider himself to have a drink problem. In truth he rarely drank, the problem was more the why and when he drank - for courage, to make things hazy. To find that point between not caring and caring just enough about his actions. About the actions of others. And yet it got him nowhere. There was no amount of drink that he could imbibe and still remain standing, that would allow him to pursue his wants. His needs.

He'd made the decision to stop drinking altogether for a while. The last thing he needed was more poor decisions, more drunken kisses leaving him hard and wanting, but running in the other direction. He figured that not drinking would mean no temptation. No pursuit. He could just ignore this side of himself. Because that was surely what he wanted.

He tried to believe that. Almost succeeded right up until he met Monsieur Le Chiffre.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Le Chiffre comes into Luke's life...

Chapter Notes

This started as me thinking it would be a cute, under 1000 words, fic. But then I caught the feels and now it's this.

Massive thanks to Llewcie for the Beta <3<3<3

Luke first became aware of Le Chiffre at an investment seminar that he was covering for Brandon Communications in place of Rebecca who was on vacation with her new boyfriend. Ironic, Luke thought, as he was seated next to the strikingly attractive man. Of course Becky being with her new boyfriend would lead to Luke being sat next to a beautifully accented, gorgeous looking European - a scar over his eye making him look all the more intriguing. And as usual he was going to do absolutely nothing about it. He ran through so many things in his head that he might say, but of course did not. He pointedly did not speak to the man sat so close to him it sent a shiver through him. The shiver only increased the few occasions Le Chiffre's steely gaze happened to pass over him. More so the couple of times the seminar lulled and allowed for conversation - opportunities that Luke avoided by checking emails on his phone - busy editor, busy!

*

The second time had been for an interview. Le Chiffre was making waves in the stock market and had accepted an invitation to the office to be interviewed for a future issue. Not having really caught his name at the seminar, thanks to being rendered almost totally non-verbal, Luke had been a little surprised to see that Jean Duran was the man from the seminar. Of course, everyone knew him by his nickname, apparently well earned - Le Chiffre or "The Number". It was an angle Luke liked - much like Rebecca's *Girl In The Green Scarf* - it made finance seem a little less boring. And though finance was only a small part of Brandon Communications, it was nice to feature something other than the dry tedium that had been the mainstay of Successful Savings before Becky. Of course, the interview was being done by Becky in this instance - who else could put a readable spin on finance? Luke only saw the man from a distance. And the man saw him, a faint look of recognition and then a nod across the room, which Luke returned as he felt the blush burn across his face. He retreated to his office quickly, hoping the reddening, that ran from his cheeks to his ears, had not been noted.

*

The third time was at an industry awards ceremony and dinner hosted by Finance Today Magazine. Brandon Communications was up for Best New Publication featuring a Finance Supplement. They had a table and Rebecca was sat next to him, smiling and laughing - being her usual fun self. It made his heart swell and treasure the friendship they had. That was until he looked over and saw Le Chiffre a couple of tables away looking at him. Yes, definitely looking at him and Becky with what Luke might have imagined to be disappointment. Le Chiffre had looked soft at first glance but his eyes then flicked quickly to Becky and turned cold - his face hard and set. Luke found his heart sinking and felt ridiculous as a result. Even so, he was glad when they didn't win the award so that he didn't have to walk the length of the room to the podium under the man's gaze.

*

The fourth time Luke met Le Chiffre made his palms sweat. He had been in the finance district on business when he ducked into a coffee shop to grab something on the go. He was walking in just as Le Chiffre was collecting his coffee and heading towards the door. Luke moved into the queue hoping to go unnoticed but he had been spotted. It was some consolation that Le Chiffre seemed, momentarily, as hesitant as he felt. Luke looked away, tried to appear interested in something by the counter while he waited for the line to move forward.

"It's Luke Brandon, yes?" He was pulled back by the cool, level voice, swallowing hard before turning to look at the man now stood next to him.

"Yes. It is." Luke was unsure what else to say and even then his voice broke a little - his usual casual charm died entirely in Le Chiffre's presence. Especially as the man then formed his lips into a smile that sent a shiver through him. He found he was gritting his teeth. He didn't want to feel this way. He didn't want to see this man and feel this way every time he did.

"I wanted to thank you for the interview in your publication; it was well received." A crooked grin caused a little flutter in Luke. And that accent alone could undo Luke - the discomfort at the thought was palpable.

He managed a curt nod. "Oh, great. I'm glad." The words were haltingly spoken and he felt rude when there was then a lull. Another small smile from Le Chiffre, the curt nod returned and the man was out the door.

Luke felt able to breath again. He also felt like an asshole. He hated himself a little.

*

The fifth time Luke saw Le Chiffre it was at a networking event. An evening do with black ties and cocktails. Luke was entering the room and being passed a glass of champagne when he spotted Le Chiffre across the room. The man was dressed all in black. Black suit strangely complimented by a black shirt and glossy black tie. Luke couldn't imagine anyone else carrying it off and Le Chiffre certainly stood out. But it was the perfect cut of the suit around his clearly athletic body that made Luke's breath catch.

He immediately placed the champagne back on the tray - there was no way he was going to drink. The temptation would be there to… to what? Let him be himself? He shook the thought away. He still wasn't able to accept it. After all this time, he knew what it would take to make him happy, but he was terrified of it all the same. How much had he missed out on by being scared? He knew he had issues with his mum leaving when he was a child, a fear of commitment and a fear of abandonment wrapped up in the never resolved thoughts and feelings over his sexuality.

He shook the thoughts away and headed into the room.

He saw fleeting glimpses of Le Chiffre throughout the night, here and there amongst the rooms of the event. Once they caught each other's eye and Le Chiffre coldly turned away before Luke had chance - leaving him with a hollow feeling.

He fancied Le Chiffre, he needed to admit that to himself. He found him attractive, he liked his voice, he found his head for numbers fascinating - though the nickname that came with it a little ridiculous. He liked this man, he had to admit that, he had to just deal with it - accept it. Becky had told him time and again that he needed to let himself be happy.

He did didn't he? He just had to accept this. Accept the attraction he felt. Not be so fucked up over letting himself pursue relationships. The weight of these thoughts was suffocating. If he didn't really need to be there to promote Brandon Communications he would have considered leaving - which felt really childish when he thought about it. But he wasn't going to let himself think about it. Just keep on keeping on, network, network, network.

Three hours in and everyone, it seemed, other than him appeared incredibly drunk. Maybe it just seemed that way because he was sober, or maybe it was the genuine consequence of the open bar. Luke was finding it tedious but had to admit his mood was affected by Le Chiffre being there. Not that the man was responsible for that; he'd done nothing wrong. No, it was all squarely on Luke's shoulders. He just didn't want to unpack and deal with his feelings on that. It struck him as bizarre that he was suddenly thinking of all of this, almost trying to resolve it a little in his mind. Now of all times.

But maybe the timing was apt - when he excused himself to the bathroom, there washing his hands was Le Chiffre.

"Oh…" Luke had no idea what to say. If anything at all.

Le Chiffre's eyes narrowed at him for a moment and then a smile tweaked his lips.

"Luke Brandon. You are an interesting fellow." The words were clear,but there was something Luke could only describe as 'fuzzy around the edges', about Le Chiffre that betrayed the drinks he had consumed. He remained incredibly well put together, aside from the minute details - the tie ever so slightly out of place, the same with a small lock of hair fallen loose across his forehead. Luke only noticed because he was sober and because he had spent altogether too much time stealing glances at Le Chiffre since their first meeting.

Luke found himself smiling without even thinking about it, and then reigning it back. If he'd had a drink he might have tried to kiss the man. But being sober and in control he saw things

differently. His old fears felt not as biting though still present. He felt more in control of them now he wasn't drinking to blot them long enough to have a taste of what he desired. And what he truly desired was this man before him. He desired his lips and his taste, the feel of his skin, the heat of his body.

The thoughts were consuming him to the point that he barely registered where he was and what was happening - until he felt lips press against his.

Le Chiffre tasted vaguely of spirits on top of champagne - a bittersweet mixture. His lips were soft and parted gently against his own. There was control there as well, despite the alcohol, the movement was firm - pressing Luke's own to their will. He felt consumed. A heat burning through him from his lips, through his core and into his dick. He heard the drawn out moan before it registered that it was his own. Le Chiffre's hand snaked up to the back of his head, gripping his hair ever so slightly, making Luke arch involuntarily against him and feeling his mutual arousal.

This was like nothing he had experienced before. This was everything. It was everything he wanted and needed. The fears that had haunted him felt very distant, like fog dissipating on the horizon. It may reform at some point, but now, sober, things didn't seem as terrifying.

He trembled as Le Chiffre pulled back, his hands slipping from the back of Luke's hand around to rest on his cheek instead.

"I've been wanting to do that for a very long time." Le Chiffre's mouth curved in a wolfish grin, his accent thick.

Luke was trying to get his breath even as found himself pressing his face into Le Chiffre's hand. Melting into the touch. Le Chiffre used the hand to draw him near once more, but this time lips moving to his ear.

"Luke, I've had a little too much to drink in getting up my nerve to approach you. Would you be so generous as to ensure that I get home safely? I believe that would only be fair."

Luke's mouth went dry, sweat prickled his skin in anticipation rather than terror. He was ready for this, whatever this was. He was even ready for the hand that drifted slowly to his tented trousers and took him in hand as he whimpered. So very very glad that he was sober and able to savour this.

As Le Chiffre drew back Luke leaned forward and captured his lips with his own. Another taste of the man, a promise of more. "You're right, it would be only fair."

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